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1. [FOUR TIMES AMENDED] A method of conducting a specific binding assay for the presence of an analyte in a cell sample which method comprises the steps of:

i) mixing a sample of cells with a cell lysis reagent to provide a lysed cellular sample;

ii) mixing the lysed cellular sample with a specific binding assay reagent comprising a specific binding partner of the analyte and a tracer to perform a specific binding assay by forming a reaction mixture comprising a specific binding partner-analyte complex;

E1
iii) mixing the lysed cellular sample with a cyclodextrin sequestrant for the cell lysis reagent, whereby the specific binding assay of step ii) is performed in the presence of the sequestrant; and

iv) detecting the presence of the specific binding partner-analyte complex the presence of which is indicative of the presence of the analyte in the sample.

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18. [TWICE AMENDED] The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the assay reagent comprises a label for detection wherein the label is selected from the group consisting of radioactive isotope labels, enzyme-linked labels and fluorescent labels.